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## Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, great is Your faithfulness. We find strength in difficult times because our thoughts about Your mercy and providential care sustain us.

Lord, guide our lawmakers to make You their sure foundation. From this foundation, may they gain strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Help them to base their hope on Your exceedingly great and precious promises, as You do for them more than they can ask or imagine. May they have such an inner sense of Your presence that they will desire to commune with You throughout this day.

And, Lord, bless our incoming summer page class. May these young people increase intellectually, physically, socially, and spiritually.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

### SANCTIONS LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, last week, the Senate voted on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis to advance the Iran sanctions bill currently before

us, and we will take another vote today to proceed to that bill. I want to thank the chairs and ranking members of the Foreign Relations and Banking Committees—Chairman CORKER, Chairman CRAPO—for their efforts to craft additional, much-needed sanctions on Russia as well. I would encourage Members of both parties to keep working together so we can pass the critical Iran sanctions legislation very soon.

### HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, 7 years ago, Senate Democrats and the Obama administration forced ObamaCare on the American people, but ObamaCare never actually lived up to what Democrats had promised. From rising costs to shrinking choices and collapsing markets, the problems associated with ObamaCare grew across the country as the years passed, leaving the American people to literally pick up the pieces.

ObamaCare's years-long legacy of failure will only get worse unless we act. Consider the latest examples of how it is threatening to hurt more Americans. In Washington State, people in two counties just learned they could have zero insurance options under ObamaCare plans next year. Thousands of Ohioans across 18 counties just found out they could also be left with absolutely zero choices under ObamaCare. Iowans could be left without a single major insurance option to choose from statewide as well. And in Nebraska, nearly 100,000 residents learned they could be left with just one insurance option on the ObamaCare exchanges next year or potentially none at all.

At the rate things are going, Americans living in nearly half of all counties could be left with just one or even zero insurance options under ObamaCare next year. Think about that. Millions of people in nearly half of all the counties across America are

at risk of having no options or a single option of insurance plans because of ObamaCare.

Worse still, as choices continue to drop, premiums keep rising, often by double digits, meaning those lucky enough to have a choice under ObamaCare may not even be able to afford the plan they select. It is a fact underlined by reports released just this afternoon by the Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services, or CMS. These reports show that hundreds of thousands of Americans who selected an ObamaCare plan ended up canceling their coverage after just a few weeks, and the most common reason they cited for doing so was because it was too expensive. Is it any wonder? As another groundbreaking report revealed last month, premiums have on average doubled—and in some cases even tripled—in the vast majority of States on the Federal exchange since ObamaCare's full enactment in 2013.

You would think the Democrats would want to work with us now to clean up the years-long mess they created. Instead, they are defending the status quo or trying to shift the blame for the failures of their own law—a law Democrats designed, a law Democrats forced on our country, a law Democrats defended year after year as it hurt Americans over and over. There is just no serious way to try to spin these years of ObamaCare failures at this late date.

It is also clear that the status quo is simply unsustainable and demands action. That is why Republican Senators have been working hard on solutions that could help rescue American families who have been hurt by this law's failures. Members will keep working this week because bringing relief from ObamaCare may not be easy, but it is necessary. We are going to keep working hard to get this done.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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